

What is claimed:

1. In a center beam railcar comprising a deck,
bulkheads at opposite ends of the railcar, and a center beam
5 extending longitudinally of the railcar and including a
center sill, a top chord, and an intermediate structure
connecting the top chord and the center sill, the center
beam having a height greater than or equal to that of the
bulkheads, the improvement wherein the top chord has a width
10 that is not substantially greater than the width of said
intermediate structure.

2. The improvement of claim 1 wherein said top chord
is of a generally rectangular, tubular configuration.

3. The improvement of claim 1 wherein said top chord
15 is of generally square tubular configuration.

4. The improvement of claim 1 wherein said deck
includes a depressed central portion.

5. The improvement of claim 4 wherein said railcar has
a clear loading height of at least about 14 ft. above said
20 depressed central portion of said deck.

6. The improvement of claim 4 wherein said railcar is
capable of carrying at least about 110 tons of wood products
having a density of about 30 lbs./cu. ft. without exceeding
the AAR Plate F clearances.

25 7. The improvement of claim 1 wherein the deck
includes first and second end portions at a first elevation
and a depressed central portion at a second elevation, each
of the end portions having a length equal to an integral

multiple of the length of a standard product to be carried by said deck.

8. The improvement of claim 7 wherein said first elevation is above said second elevation by a dimension
5 approximately equal to the height of a product to be carried in said depressed central portion.

9. The improvement of claim 8 further comprising elongated flexible members for securing the lading, and longitudinally adjustable winches for securing said
10 elongated flexible members.

10. The improvement of claim 9 wherein said railcar further comprises a pair of side sills, and wherein said winches are supported on one of the side sills, and the elongated flexible members are of sufficient length to
15 extend from said winches over the lading and top chord to the opposite side sill when the car is fully loaded, and wherein said railcar further includes retaining means on the opposite side sill to secure the free ends of the elongated flexible members.

20 11. The improvement of claim 10 wherein said intermediate structure includes a plurality of posts, and further includes, at each end, one or more elongated structural supports connecting one or more of the posts to a respective one of the bulkheads, and wherein said elongated
25 structural supports are not connected to the center sill or the top chord.

12. A method of securing a load on a center beam railcar comprising:

providing a strap on a first side of the railcar and
30 retaining a first end of said strap on said first side;
providing a fastener on the opposite side of said

railcar;

passing a second end of the strap over the load and over the top chord of the railcar to the other side of the railcar while retaining the first end of the strap on said
5 first side;

securing the second end of the strap to the second side of the railcar with said fastener; and
tensioning the strap.

13. The method of claim 12 further comprising
10 providing a corner protector as part of the load.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein tensioning the strap comprises winding the strap onto a winch, said method further comprising adjusting the longitudinal position of at least one end of said strap by adjusting the longitudinal
15 position of at least one of said winch and said fastener.

15. A method of securing a load on a center beam railcar comprising:

providing a strap on a first side of the railcar and retaining a first end of said strap on said first side;
20 passing a second end of the strap over the load and under the top chord of the railcar to the other side of the railcar while retaining the first end of the strap on said first side;

securing the second end of the strap to the second side
25 of the railcar; and
tensioning the strap.

16. In a center beam railcar having an elongated flexible member connected to the railcar to secure the lading on the railcar deck, the improvement comprising a
30 longitudinally adjustable retainer to secure an end of the elongated flexible member to the railcar.

17. The improvement of claim 16 wherein said longitudinally adjustable retainer comprises a winch.

18. The improvement of claim 17 wherein said elongated flexible member comprises a 4 ½ in. wide strap.

5 19. In a center beam railcar comprising a center beam including a center sill, a top chord, and a plurality of posts extending between the center sill and the top chord, a pair of bulkheads at opposite ends of the center beam, and one or more load-supporting surfaces between the bulkheads,
10 the improvement comprising one or more structural supports which are connected to one of said bulkheads and one or more posts, and which are not connected to said center sill or to said top chord.

20. The improvement of claim 19 wherein each of said
15 one or more structural supports extends substantially horizontally between said bulkhead and said one or more posts.